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But we can now assert that this trade cannot, abstractedly speaking, have a legitimate existence.

"When I say abstractedly speaking, I mean that this country has no right to control any foreign legislature that may think fit to dissent from this doctrine, and to permit to its own subjects the prosecution of this trade, but we have now a right to affirm that, *prima facie*, the trade is illegal, and thus to throw on claimants the burden of proof that, in respect of them, by the authority of their own laws, it is otherwise. As the case now stands, we think we are entitled to say, that a claimant can have no right upon principles of universal law to claim the restitution in a prize court of human beings carried as his slaves. He must show some right that has been violated by the capture, some property of which he has been dispossessed, and to which he ought to be restored. In this case the laws of the claimant's country allow of no right of property such as he claims. There can, therefore, be no right to restitution. The consequence is, that the judgment must be affirmed."

We congratulate the friends of the oppressed Africans on this important and most satisfactory judgment. It gives a death-blow to the most active contraband dealers in human blood on the coast of Africa, and removes one of the greatest obstacles to the effectual execution of our own laws, for the abolition of the slave trade; for, be it observed, that not the subjects of America only, but of Sweden, and, in short, of all states, which have not expressly legalized this trade, are equally affected by the operation of the principle laid down by the learned judge.

#### CAUSE OF THE FAILURES.

The facility that has been given to immoderate speculation is the source of the evil. In all periods of our history this has from time to time arisen, and has regularly produced the same effects. If in the year 1797, on the restriction of cash payments at the Bank, the Directors had acted (as they solemnly pledged themselves they would act) in their accustomed way, and still as if they were bound to pay in specie, the present calamity would not have come upon us. But unfortunately the thirst of profit on their parts, and the necessities of the government on the other, which induced ministers to wink at the enormity of the issues of paper, have fostered and encouraged this system to an extent which has brought the present misfortune upon us. But the mischief will cease when the cause of it comes to be thoroughly understood, and when it shall be seen that the remedy is simple and safe.

BELFAST MAG. NO. XXV.

Our readers well know the causes of the convulsion which ended in the cash restriction bill. The unbounded drain for *subsidies*, followed by the alarm of invasion, which gave rise to the orders for taking an account of stock, as a previous measure to *draining* the countries—produced the restriction bill in 1797. At that time the bank reduced its paper to 8½ millions.—By the last returns, their notes in circulation amount to 21 millions! and it is manifest that the paper of the provincial banks has increased in the same proportion.—The natural consequence of this has been, that the facility of credit has raised up a set of adventurers, in opposition to the real merchants, who, instead of supplying the actual necessities of the world, have pushed an artificial trade of mere adventure, to every corner of the inhabited earth, and to force commerce beyond its natural limits, facilities have been given in a way heretofore unknown. Middle men of a new description have started up, and the fair useful trade of banking has been converted into an instrument of goss and pernicious delusion. We have promised to illustrate this matter.

A house, with a sounding firm, charters a ship for South America. They inform the manufacturers that they perfectly know what will answer the market, and if they have any old fashioned cottons, or any old shopkeepers, they may take the opportunity of making a consignment, allowing them a small commission, freight, &c. and they may have an immense profit both on the goods out, and on the return goods home. They may draw on them for the amount, at 12, 18, and 24 months. And they inform them, that there are several houses of the first respectability in London, who on the deposit of those long bills will allow their country banker to draw on them at two months, on a new commission of ten shillings per cent. and that these short bills may be renewed till the returns come. The manufacturer or shopkeeper is delighted with a proposal, by which he is to empty his warehouse or shop for every thing unsaleable, and to be put into immediate possession of paper money, by which he may set all his looms and artisans to work, and refurnish his magazine with an entire new stock. He makes up his packages, charging, however, his goods at double their real value, that they may not be undervalued when they reach the market, and thus he very kindly begins by assisting to cheat himself. The vessel reaches the port, when, lo! the goods are not wanted. The market is already over-stocked. But, rather than return without breaking bulk, the supercargo takes what he can get—half the price charged in the invoice; but still

he hugs himself that that is something, as the goods would not have sold at all in London. The next thing is to buy a consignment in return; but he finds that, from the number of buyers, the skins, the tallow, the hemp, &c. have risen to double their real value. No matter, they must do something; and a cargo is brought home. Here again the market is overstocked, and necessity obliges them to sell it at a loss, and by this time the long bills become due, and the whole province is not within thirty per cent. of the principal; in the mean time, however, the manufactures of the country have been quickened; the exports and imports have been swelled, and a great increase has been experienced in the revenue which the minister states with exultation to Parliament; and holds up as a proof that all the tyrannical efforts of Bonaparte cannot keep down the spirit of trade.

It is perfectly clear that speculation carried to this excess must end in disappointment; and though the consequences will be severely felt for the moment by the numerous classes who have been drawn within the vortex of this revolutionary system, yet certainly it is for the permanent interests of the realm that it should be brought to a stand; that trade should return to its ancient course, and that it should be regulated by the natural, not the forced demands of the world. In the bursting of this bubble, neither the original adventurer who explored distant markets, nor the confiding manufacturer who sent his goods on such a voyage of discovery, nor the discounting banker who lent his name to the bills for a commission, are to be pitied. The person who is the least deserving of commiseration, is the last. Nothing can be more mischievous than a speculation of this kind by a banker, who holds deposits of cash in his hands, and who risks the very subsistence of his customers by this kind of traffic. The whole of this complicated machine derives its movement by this facility of credit. A banking-house with a floating sum of actual deposits in their hands of £ or 500,000*l.* not content with using this sum as they might safely do in the discount of short paper, permit houses at Liverpool and elsewhere to draw upon them for hundreds of thousands, without the slightest basis; and when the shock comes, the actual deposits of their *bona fide* customers become the sacrifice.

#### ANALYSIS OF THE REPORT OF THE BULLION COMMITTEE.

The report is written with great ability and caution, indeed, with so much of the latter ingredient, that the committee have avoided to make any inference which result from the evidence detailed in the appendix. Apparently they are unwilling to display the whole truth, lest popular

indignation should be excited too strongly against paper currency, and the banks which issue it. But the public will, no doubt, perceive that the evil they suffer does not justify hatred of the individuals who have done nothing illegal or improper. The imprudent law which restricted the the bank from gold payment is solely to blame, and to the repeal of that law only, all efforts should be directed as far as prudence may advise.

The bullion committee first inquire into the price of bullion, and find that a guinea is worth about 23*s.* of paper-money, and this degree of depreciation of paper-currency is confirmed by the rate of foreign exchanges, which are from 15 to 20 per cent. against England, though the real exchange would at present otherwise be in her favour.

It results from this unnatural state of things, that while a good guinea can only be current for 21*s.* the same guinea melted or mutilated is worth 23*s.*; and that a guinea too light to pass in currency, acquires value by its deficiency, and is actually worth about 22*s.*!—It is impossible, therefore, that any gold coin should remain in currency and the result is clear, that the public lose about 2*s.* in a guinea on their income and expenditure; in other words, that the substitution of paper-currency for gold is nearly double the evil of the income tax, and consequently costs the public about twenty millions a year.

The committee in their report have given credit to the bank directors examined by them, for an incredible degree of alleged ignorance of this inevitable effect of issuing bank notes indefinitely, and even compliment them on their forbearance in not pushing a greater quantity into circulation. The fact seems to be, that the stoppage of payment in 1797 was occasioned by no fault of the bank of England, but by a concurrence of untoward accidents; but that the continuance of that stoppage has been caused by the natural disinclination of the bank to obviate what they found so profitable, is undeniable. However, it is really a questionable point of casuistry, whether a bank director, entrusted with the interest of so large a body of constituents, could with propriety strive against their interest so manifestly as to remedy a public misfortune indeed, but one which produces little less to that opulent company than 500,000*l.* per annum. Hence their various disguises in slaring their augmented profit, and the enormous rise in the value of bank stock.

It is plain that the above statement of their increase of annual profit is deduced from the amount of their notes at present current, being about ten millions more than at the time of the stoppage of actual payment on demand.

The quantity of country Bank Notes

is proved by the committee to be greatly dependant on the quantity of bank of England notes, in which they are payable. One of the witnesses estimates these country notes at twelve millions, but they are probably rather more than thirty millions, as the gold coin in circulation used to be estimated at that sum, when there were only ten millions of bank of England notes, making the then circulation forty millions, besides country notes, at that time, perhaps five millions. Forty-five millions must have been augmented to fifty-four millions, to produce a depreciation of 20 per cent. as at present, whereby the country bank-notes appear to amount to about thirty-four millions the bank of England notes being twenty millions in circulation; herein supposing the argument rapidly of pecuniary transactions to balance the greater quantity of them, and that the same amount of circulating medium is now necessary as in 1797.

Supposing the bank of England to gain 500,000*l.* and the country bankers 1,500,000 per annum, by the extraordinary and artificial circulation of paper-currency, it is a curious instance of vast evil produced by a small comparative benefit. If one man robs another, the robber gains what the other loses; but by the present depreciation of the national currency, twenty millions per annum is lost by the public, and only two millions gained by the bankers. So dangerous is it to tamper ignorantly with coin or paper-money.

Under the glaring and increasing injustice to the public above described, no doubt can remain respecting the conduct of the legislature in recurring as

speedily as possible to the old fashion of exacting an actual value for paper currency; but it is to be observed in favour of government that to the close of 1808, gold was not decidedly depreciated, at least not above 6*d.* in a guinea, but so soon as the depreciation became decided and unquestionable, all gold disappeared of course, and country bankers increased their number as well as their notes to fill up the vacancy. The number of country bankers in 1797 was 230; now it is about 721, of whom 121 have sprung up in the last year.

The committee have forborne to place in the ridiculous view it deserves, the actual building of a new and extensive Mint, on Tower-hill, when it is manifest that no gold or silver coin of mint weight can possibly be current. In the close of the report, powerful motives are ably urged, founded on the virtual breach of all bargains of any duration, and on the injustice of ruining the public creditor, and all other annuitants.

They express an opinion "that the integrity and honour of parliament are concerned not to authorize longer than is required by imperious necessity the continuance of a system of circulation, in which that natural check is absent which secures the substantial justice and faith of moneyed contracts and obligations between man and man."

They then recommend the repeal of the restriction law after two years notice, in which time they think warning enough will have been given to the bank and other bankers, gradually to lessen their paper issues, or to retire from the trade with the gain they have already acquired,

## DOMESTIC OCCURRENCES.

### STATE OF THE BELFAST WEEKLY, OR SUNDAY SCHOOL.

In offering to the Public their annual statement and address, the Committee and Teachers of the Sunday School beg leave to state, that nothing but the inadequacy of their funds, with the high price of timber in the spring of this year, prevented them then commencing the building of an appropriate School-house on the ground they have obtained for that purpose. They however flatter themselves that much time has not been lost, as in the interim they have acquired a considerable degree of information on the subject of an approved plan on which such a building should be erected.

Having an earnest desire to introduce into this town the Lancastrian mode of teaching; and extending their views from a weekly, to a daily free school, they

have had some communications with Mr. Lancaster on that subject, who has with that pontence and liberality for which he is so highly distinguished, given every information required of him, and has also promised to give all the further assistance in his power towards carrying into effect so desirable a project.

The committee and teachers have therefore resolved, that should they be supported by the public, they will endeavour as soon as in their power, to introduce a system of teaching generally approved of, and which has been found to be productive of so many advantages to society.

In carrying this measure into effect, they have been advised by those conversant with the subject, to beware of commencing on a contracted scale. On the most mature deliberation, therefore, they have